Construction of railway line between Khurdha and Bolangir in Orissa

423. SHRI JAGADISH JANI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to connect Bolangir in Western Orissa with Khurdha in coastal Orissa by Rail;

(b) whether a line is proposed to be constructed via Phulbani for that purpose; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to implement that proposal ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) A survey was carried out for Khurdha Road-Balangir (289 Km. new BG railway line in 1986. The project was then estimated to cost Rs. 209 crores with 1% return on investment. An alternative alignment via Phulbani was also surveyed but the same was found very costly and with steeper gradients and as such could not be considered.

The proposal was sent to the Planning Commission for consideration and approval for development of backward areas during VIII Five Year Plan. Planning Commission has directed that the project be referred to the Working Group alongwith similar other projects on the basis of justification and *inter-se* priorities for consideration in the VIII plan.

Closure of Paradeep Phosphates Ltd.

424. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Paradeep Phosphates Limited, a joint venture of India and Nauru set up at Paradeep in Orissa hasr ecently been shut down;

(b) whether that plant was closed so many times earlier as well;

(c) if so, the reasons of the frequent closure of the plant; and

(d) the steps taken so far to avoid the circumstances or factors leading to the frequent closure of the plant?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The closures of the plant have been due to non-availability of imported phosphoric acid and ammonia as well as industrial relations problems.

(d) The situation will improve when Phase-II of the Project which envisages captive production of phosphoric acid is completed and dependence on imported phosphoric acid is reduced.

Curtailment of quota of edible—oils of the States

425. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any curtailment of quota of edible oils to States recently;

(b) if so, which are the States affected by this general curtailment;

(c) what are the reasons for curtailing the quota of edible oils to States; and

(d) whether the demand of the Government of Maharashtra for increasing their quota of edible oil has been accepted ?